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News Release

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USDA to Gauge Farmland Ownership and Farm Economics

The United States Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will begin surveying farmland owners to measure financial impacts and challenges of land ownership. Landowners should have received questionnaires in the mail in late December or early January called, "Tenure, Ownership, and Transition of Agricultural Land (TOTAL).

"The recent Census of Agriculture counted more than 4,000,000 acres of land that were rented or leased in Michigan, but it has been more than a decade since we spoke to landowners themselves," said Jay Johnson, director of the USDA/NASS-Great Lakes Region. "I hope all who receive TOTAL surveys will respond to help update landownership information." The data will ensure that all decisions impacting Michigan farmland is based on accurate information that comes directly from the source.

TOTAL is a part of the Census of Agriculture program, which means response to this survey is MANDATORY. The TOTAL survey program will collect data from both farm operators and landlords who are not farm operators to create a complete picture of farm costs, land ownership, demographics about farm operators and landlords, improvements made to farmland and buildings, among other characteristics. More than 80,000 farmland owners and producers across the United States will receive TOTAL questionnaires including 1,783 in Michigan.

"This survey is lengthy and we realize some producers and landowners may have questions or need clarification," explained Johnson. "In February or March, our interviewers will begin reaching out to those producers and landowners who have not yet responded to answer any questions they may have and help them complete their questionnaires." In addition to accurate data, NASS is strongly committed to confidentiality. Information produced by respondents is confidential by law. The agency safeguards the confidentiality of all responses, ensuring no individual respondent or operation can be identified.

NASS will publish results of the TOTAL survey in its Quick Stats database in August 2015. Quick Stats is available online at quickstats.nass.usda.gov. NASS will also publish the economic data gathered in the annual *Farm Production Expenditures* report on August 4, 2015. All NASS reports are available online at www.nass.usda.gov.